

# Some Experiences of Lord Syfret.

BY ARABELLA KENEALY.

## THE WOLF AND THE STORK.

ILLUSTRATED BY R. SAVAGE.

### CHAPTER I.



DETEST hotels. I have in them always a sense of being in a menagerie. Whether it be that persons in a crowd revert to primitive conditions, or that their collective atmosphere somehow betrays the lower origin, I cannot say. I only know that individuals, who at home would be refined enough, and decent members of society, suggest a zoo when massed together in hotel. As will doubtless have long since become apparent, I am, no amiable person, nor do I think I can be suspected of loving, no matter what scientific interest it pleases me to take in my fellow-man. Therefore, I avoid a crowd; therefore I am no frequenter of hotels. Chance took me, however, one summer to a holiday resort in Scotland, a place where men pursue the sport of golf and women prosecute the sport of man. It was but a moderate-sized hotel, and, having been fortunate enough to secure a pleasant suite of rooms, I could retreat into my lair whenever the gambollings of growlings of my fellow-brutes threatened to disturb my composure.

Saturday being the day of my arrival, the next day was Sunday, and uncongenially dull. To relieve the tedium somewhat I dined with the menagerie. At the table next to mine there sat a girl who reminded me of nothing so much as a little white rabbit—she was so blonde of colouring, so mentally and physically fluffy. With her was her mother—a person of sagacious stork-like aspect whose bland eye and beaky profile surveyed the scene from the height of a neck characteristically long

and adroit of movement. That eye detecting me seated lonely at my bachelor table, she by a deft manoeuvre changed places with her daughter, so that Miss Bunny of the dimpling cheek and downy hair faced me in all her charm.

"Why am I to sit this side, mother?" I heard her whisper. She glanced aside long from beneath her lashes toward a neighbouring table.

"There is such a draught, my darling," Mrs. Stork returned, responding to her daughter's question. Then answering her glance, "Sir Alfred left this morning." Mistress Bunny sent one little sigh in the train of the departed Alfred, then apparently dismissed him. A moment later she had lifted a demure engaging glance at me from out of the folds of her serviette.

My vanity was little flattered to discover this inspection followed by a disappointed droop at the corners of her mouth. Plainly I was no welcome substitute for the absent Alfred. Possibly I was twice as old.

Two evenings later Miss Bunny sat again in the draught. For Sir Alfred's table was once more occupied. A young, good-looking man sat there—a stranger, apparently, for the Storks made no show of recognising him. I had thought the evening chilly, but Mrs. Stork to all appearance thought otherwise, for she leaned forward and loosened a pink lace scarf the girl wore round her shoulders—loosened it till it left her soft little throat and shoulders bared.

"You look so heated, dear Dolly," she exclaimed, tenderly.

"Yes, mother darling," the girl responded with a shiver.

The eye of Mrs. Stork, suffused by the gentlest solicitude, sought mine. I

noticed then that my long-necked neighbour was exceptionally smart. And she wore a new and very fine cap. It occurred to me that Mr. Stork had in all probability been gathered to his feathered fathers.

At times, as you know, I am subject to strange impressions. The aura I have mentioned as surrounding houses reveals itself to me as surrounding persons. Dinner was over, and I was engaged on my filberts when suddenly my surface chilled as though a wind passed over it. My hair lifted.

The phenomenon known as goose-skin shivered through me. At the same time I was conscious of an eerie high-pitched wailing. I looked round quickly. All the doors were closed. There was no opened window whence draught or sound might enter. All that had happened was, that the young man at the next table had left his place and was just about to make his exit by the swinging door. He must have passed behind me at the moment I had heard that wailing.

I observed him later in the smoke-room. There was nothing about him to warrant the uncanny or unwelcome. He was a well-grown, fresh-faced youngster of about twenty-four. He had the manner and bearing of a youth of breeding. He sat apart with a somewhat reserved air, smoking and watching a game of billiards. It was a close game, and most of the men in the room were following it with interest. A few bets even were exchanged.

Once I noticed the young man, at a moment when all eyes were bent on a crucial stroke, suddenly flash a swift glance round the room, and discovering

no eye upon him, fling up his head and break into a short, rough laugh. I was sitting near, and it struck on my ear with a jar of savagery. An instant later his face was composed, his looks were on the game, his lips were set about his cigarette. One or two persons turned round sharply in his direction, as though they also had heard and wondered. He



"BREAK INTO A SHORT, ROUGH LAUGH."

met their eyes quietly, and with his air of reserve. But I was not deceived. That young man, for all his fresh-facedness, is meditating a mischief, I decided. The recollection of my impression came back. I felt uncomfortable, for if ever a laugh threatened murder that laugh of his did.

In the course of the evening I addressed some commonplace to him. Was he a golfer? He answered pleasantly. He

had an agreeable voice; his eyes were of an engaging blue; his well-cut features lightened as he talked. I thought his adversary, whosoever he might be, must have treated him badly indeed to rouse such rancour in a youth so well favoured. Some love affair, possibly.

Yet was he not inconsolable, for by ten o'clock next day he had succumbed to the charms of Miss Bunny. I met him with his case of clubs as I went up the hotel steps. "Bitten with the fever?" I interrogated. "Not badly, sir," he answered. "Only lady sitting at table next me—lady with long neck dropped her knitting. Awfully civil when I picked it up. Asked me to show her girl how to make a tee."

A soft little voice at my side insinuated sibilantly.

"I'm ready now, Mr. Carvill. Mother has bought me a new driver. Don't you think it sweetly pretty with that band of blue leather on it?"

He turned and looked down at the

narrow little face with its prominent pink lips and white teeth. He ran a cool eye over her features and smartly-clad form. His slight moustache lifted as though he smiled. He turned and went down the steps. At the foot he dropped a pace behind, his eyes appraising her the while he adjusted a strap of his clubs. Then he glanced round with that same look I had seen the previous evening. "Nobody being at hand he lifted up his head—and laughed. The jar of it came grating on the air. My skin rose in pin points. I heard a muffled wailing."

Then they disappeared round the corner, a couple of comely young persons chattering in the sunlight.

I passed into the house and, into the drawing-room. At a window half-concealed behind a curtain Mrs. Stork craned her long neck. Every line of her betokened exultation. Complacent satisfaction played about her beak. Hearing me she turned. She made two steps in my direction. I fled precipitately.

## CHAPTER II.

THAT night young Carvill sat at the Stork table. Little Miss Bunny dimpled and frisked, lifting shy silly glances to him from beneath her pale lashes. She wore no scarf, at all that evening and she shivered in her sleeveless frock. Mrs. Stork's cap was wondrous fine.

Carvill accepted their attentions with a kind of absent nonchalance. He seemed out of sorts, being pale and self-absorbed. But I noticed his glances linger with a curious stare on the undulant curve of the girl's white throat. Once meeting his look she blushed and fluttered, shielding her eyes with her pale-fringed lids. I thought the youth forgetful of his breeding. Mrs. Stork's blandishments were not improving—as they were not calculated to improve—his manners. I noticed that he drank a good deal of wine.

In the smoke-room later he was hilarious, not to say uproarious. I thought if little Miss Bunny could have heard him talk, his fresh, young, handsome face would have lost some of its charm for her. I wondered whether, had she heard certain views of his, Mrs. Stork would have trusted poor little Bunny of the brain-of-thistledown so much in his company. But nobody

made it his business to acquaint either mother or daughter with the opinions of this avowed young prodigal.

Miss Bunny started off next morning to complete her education in that matter of a tee. Mrs. Stork stood in the hotel portico, her be-ribboned and rosseted cranium bobbing with a fatuous contentment of her long neck.

"Such a very nice young man," I heard her remark to an acquaintance. The acquaintance nodded.

"Who is he?" she asked.

I caught complacent whisperings.

"Very good connections—wealthy squire—eldest son."

The lady nodded again, interested. Then she glanced somewhat wistfully in the direction of a daughter of her own—a person hopelessly plain of face, who stood brandishing her clubs and talking fondly of some marvellous stroke she had made.

"Do you think so much golf-playing improves girls' looks?" she questioned anxiously.

"My girl Dolly doesn't play much," Mrs. Stork returned, with that air of condescension adopted by the mother of beauty to the mother whose ducklings are but plain. "In fact she hasn't got



"CARVILL SAT AT THE STORK TABLE."

further than learning to make a tee—whatever a tee may be."

"I think it's that waggly way they swing their sticks before they knock the ball. That's either a tee or a bunker. They do give such queer names in golf. But really I don't fancy modern girls have the complexions girls had when they worked samplers."

I was on the point of rising. It was impossible to appreciate Chamberlain's discomfiture at the hands of wily old Kruger during this sort of thing. But

at that moment Mrs. Stork extended her wings and swooped upon me.

"Pardon, my lord," she began, with the lofty air inseparable from her long neck, "but may I borrow your *Times* a moment? I am solicitous about my friend Sir Alfred Baxendale, who is yachting in the Mediterranean. I will return it to you immediately."

I delivered it to her.

"Pray do not trouble to return it, madam," I said; "I provide myself with it solely for the pleasure of presenting it

to the first person who does me the honour of asking for it."

I bowed and rose. Then I repaired to my room and raged. I had read two lines of an exciting despatch, and these were merely prefatory. It would be hours before a paper would be available in the reading-room. Not twenty minutes later a note on scented crocodile paper, my *Times* and a popular novel were brought to me. The note ran thus: "Mrs. (I forget the name, but I fancy it was not Stork) presents her compliments to Lord Syfret, and thanks him extremely for the *Times*. She begs at the same time to lend him a copy of *East Lynne*, which he may not have read, and which may serve to amuse him in this very dull hotel."

I returned the volume with thanks, assuring Mrs. Stork that I never read novels. I gave orders that should any lady under whatsoever pretext attempt to make her way into my rooms she was to be inexorably repulsed. Then I breathed once more and dined that evening by myself. Later I strolled in the gardens. There was a bench whence I could hear the sea break while I smoked. The night was dark, and I had sat some minutes before I perceived the red glow of another cigar a few yards from me. In the dark I distinguished an undefined mass. Then a silly little voice exclaimed:

"I like a man to be awfully good-looking, Mr. Carvill."

Mr. Carvill took two puffs at his cigar. Then he said, indifferently:

"Ah!"

After a pause the silly voice remarked again:

"Don't you like good-looking girls, Mr. Carvill?"

"I prefer 'em decent-looking," Carvill admitted without enthusiasm.

"I suppose you like dark girls best?"

"O, I like 'em all colours. It's a change, you know."

There was a longer pause. Then the voice this time depressed was heard again:

"That's a good-looking girl who sits at the table in the left hand window, don't you think—the girl with rather a red nose?"

"Is her nose red? Good figure. Wears white hats."

"Well, they were once white. But the sea does spoil things so dreadfully. You would never think I've only worn that blue hat I wore this morning once before, now would you?"

"Perhaps Mr. Carvill was not listening. Anyhow he answered 'No,' which was certainly not the answer poor little Bunny was seeking. She was silent for quite an appreciable time.

Then she started again bravely: "I did so like that heather coat you wore this morning, Mr. Carvill."

Mr. Carvill took out his cigar and yawned. Then he lifted up his head—and laughed. The bench gave a sudden lurch. There was a flutter of skirts as though she had started up, and a smothered little cry.

"O, you said you'd never do it again," she panted. "You know—O, you know how it frightens me. Let me go. O, let me go."

He smothered an imprecation. Apparently he took her by the shoulders and forced her down on to the bench again.

"I told you," he protested savagely, "it's only a habit. For Heaven's sake don't keep on about it so. I did theatricals once and had to laugh like that and caught the trick."

"Let me go. Let me go," she insisted. "Mr. Carvill, you are hurting my arm."

His voice changed. A red glow made a hissing curve in the darkness, as he threw his cigar away.

"I'm awfully sorry," he apologised. "Horribly rude of me. I forgot. I get savage when it's noticed."

Plainly Miss Bunny was frightened. "I want to go in," she whimpered.

"You won't mention it. Promise you won't mention it."

"I promise. No, don't you come. Good-night."

"Good-night. I say, mayn't I, though—just one? I did last night, you know."

But Bunny's white skirts had rustled away in the darkness.

He resumed his seat and lighted another cigar. He puffed it slowly into condition. Then he lifted up his head—and laughed.

## CHAPTER III.

FROM the hotel steps next morning Mrs. Stork watched them start. Little Bunny wore a new frock and a serious air that suited its pink frills and flounces ill. She glanced once with beseeching eyes into her mother's face, and then, with a curious sidelong apprehension, at the fresh-coloured profile above her.

The storkine visage smiled with a smile that granite might have envied for its obduracy. Poor little Bunny, seeing it, shuddered, and shouldered her club with the band of blue leather about it. She tripped along beside him, stealing frightened glances up at him so long as they were visible. Then Mrs. Stork turned and ascended the steps, still smiling.

She had gained the doorway when her glance caught me. She coughed, and retraced her way as though seeking something. Finally, with an absent air, she sidled across and sat down at the opposite end of the verandah. I had made up my mind the previous evening. The opportunity presented. I am not wholly devoid of heroism, as my conduct on this occasion shows. I walked over to where she sat. I bowed and extended my *Times*.

"Your friend Sir Alfred Baxendale arrived at Nice last evening," I began. "Perhaps you would like to see for yourself."

She fairly blushed. She lifted and flapped her wings and hopped to her long legs.

"How excessively good of you," she simpered. "Really, how can I thank you?"

I sat down as far from her as my powers of vocalisation and the subject at my tongue's end made advisable.

"Your daughter seems fond of golf," I said.

"Devoted," she answered.

"She is a pretty little girl."

Her own and her maternal instincts struggled. Her own had the victory.

"She is not seventeen," she murmured, adding in low tones, "I was myself but a child when I married my late husband."

"Ah!" I answered, abstractedly.

There was a pause, during which the stork's eyes fathomed mine, seeking avidly an answer to the question as to whether my interest in Dolly were conjugal or merely step-fatherly.

To keep to the subject of Dolly, for though my intentions were neither the one nor the other, it was of Dolly I desired to speak. "An only child?" I suggested.

Mrs. Stork nodded. "That my interest should extend to other members of the family pointed rather in a step-paternal direction."

"An only daughter," she assented, evasively.

I concluded that Dolly had possibly some half-dozen brothers. But I concealed my suspicion, while Mistress Stork stole a plump, complacent hand to her head and settled her cap ribbons. Then she cast down her eyes and waited.

"You know Mr. Carvill?"

It was not a question she expected. She re-arranged her views. An interest in Carvill suggested jealousy on my part, in which case—Mrs. Stork raised her lids and looked directly into my eyes. Once more she was merely maternal.

"O, yes," she said, less sweetly. "He has been here for nearly a week. We have seen a great deal of him. Such a very nice young man we think him."

"Ah!" I said.

She stole a sharp glance toward me. Plainly this was jealousy. I thought the storkine vanity ruffled. But if not mother, why not daughter?

"My Dolly has quite taken to him," she insinuated tentatively.

"You will pardon me," I answered.

"He who does not confine himself to his own affairs generally makes a fool of himself; but I should like to say a word about this same young Carvill. Ladies—"

—here I bowed with my best air—"ladies are proverbially single-minded. But is it altogether wise to allow Miss Dolly to spend so much time in the company of a stranger?"

"It is so good of you to advise me," she murmured. "I need always somebody to advise me," she added in a flutter. The step-paternal theory was working uppermost again.

"I am interested in young people," I asserted, distantly.

"It is so good of you," she murmured a second time. "But Mr. Carvill has been so well brought up, Lord Syfret."

"I haven't a doubt of it," I agreed.



"I am speaking on general principles. To tell the truth, the boy has a rough way." I was recalling the previous evening. "He is a little strange."

"If there were anybody else," she said, "Dolly feels so lonely. She is such a loving child. She must attach herself to somebody. Now if an older man—someone more responsible—someone I could trust implicitly—"

"The girls here are good golfers and seem friendly with one another," I interrupted. Mrs. Stork bridled her long neck. She stared at me somewhat coldly. But she still maintained her smiling front.

"Dolly is timid with girls," she said, "and the girls here are mere hoydens. To tell the truth, Lord Syfret, Dolly—little puss—prefers masculine society. She is so fond of intellectual and progressive thought."

"I mentally reviewed poor little Bunny's cranial development. I remembered her loose little lips and prominent teeth."

"Indeed," I responded, without a smile.

"Yet she is nothing of a blue," she added, in a hurry.

"I am sure of it," I said.

"Perhaps you play golf, Lord Syfret?" Mrs. Stork suggested, with a sudden change of front.

"Heaven forbid!"

#### CHAPTER IV.

"MR. CARBLE says, 'Damn you!' and why didn't you get his knife properly ground?" the waiter inquired of the porter as I crossed the hall the next morning.

"Tell Mr. Carble damn him, and his knife can't be ground not any sharper than it is," the porter rejoined, in a tone of suppressed exasperation. "The fuss he's made about that knife of his nobody wouldn't believe. It's been at the cutler's three times already. If he wants it done any better, he'd best set to and do it himself."

"That's what he seems to think. He was sharpening away at it on his stop like mad when I come down. He says he'll put a hedge on it to raise Cain."

At this juncture they perceived me. The conversation ceased abruptly.

Carvill passed some minutes later with his clubs. From a glance of his I

"Or croquet?" Dolly said, yesterday—"

"Nor croquet, madam."

Mrs. Stork became all at once dignified. It began, possibly to dawn upon her that my interest was without intention. But she made one more effort.

"You are like me," she said, insinuatingly. "You are above the trivialities of life. All that you need to complete your happiness is quiet and congenial companionship—"

"You are right, madam," I assented. "the most quiet and congenial of all companionships—the company of books."

She rose. "Lord Syfret," she said with dignity, and not without acrimony, "I thank you extremely for your kind consideration. My belief in human nature would be greatly strengthened, could I but think you had spoken from some other than mere personal motives. However, despite your evident hostility—quite unfounded—against dear Mr. Carvill, I shall be careful not to breathe a word to the poor young man of your unwarranted—may I say unworthy—suspicions. The boy is so sensitive, so generous—he would be cut to the heart, indeed, if he knew what an implacable secret enemy he has. Your Times, Lord Syfret, and Good-morning!"

I dined that evening in my room alone.

had met the previous evening, I was aware that Mrs. Stork had faithfully reported my remarks. I reflected that again before I died I had rendered myself ridiculous. For Miss Bunny and Carvill had spent the whole evening together, and had risen early in order to go round the links before breakfast.

This morning he was all smiles. Seeing his fresh young face beaming friendly upon me, I experienced some discomfiture. I never regret, or I might have regretted my lack of discretion.

"Golfing again," I exclaimed, returning his salute.

"Golfing again," he assented, cheerily. He was a youth of contradictions. The night before the smoke-room had fairly resounded with his uproarious and iniquitous doctrine. This morning he was boyish and fresh-skinned.



"EVE WAS THE FIRST OF YOU"

Mrs. Stork came out as usual to see them off. She bowed to me with an air of majestic forbearance.

"Everybody has gone over to North Berwick to see Balfour play, they tell me," she giggled, "so you two will have the golf course to yourselves."

"Mother," I heard little Bunny whisper, agitatedly, "what has he got a big knife in his pocket for?"

Mrs. Stork laughed and frowned together. She patted the girl's pale cheek.

"Little, little mammy's silly," she exclaimed. "Why the knife of course is to— to cut the tee with."

"O, but how stupid. You can't cut

tees, mother. O! I don't want to go with him. I don't want to go with him."

There was no smile now on Mrs. Stork's face. Granite again might have envied her.

"I shall take you home to-morrow, then," she said, in tones that whipped.

The girl put a faltering face up.

"No, no," she whispered, with a little sob, "not that, mother dear. I'll—I'll go with him."

She went.

At the corner where the path turned out of sight I saw him pat his pocket. Then he lifted up his head—and laughed.

## CHAPTER V

AT lunch the coffee-room was empty. There had been an exodus, indeed, to see Mr. Balfour play.

I had just sat down to my table and was grumbling about something, or another—in hotels the man who grumbles loudest is the man best served—when Mrs. Stork entered alone. The triumph in the eye she cast on me was complacent to fatuity. Had she belonged to a different class she would have set her elbows on her hips and hurled a "yah!" at me.

Instead of this she beckoned a waiter and asked him loudly, "Have you seen Miss— the name—carefully sounded like 'Stork'—and Mr. Carvill?"

"No, ma'am," the answer was, "not since they went out after breakfast."

"Not since they went out after breakfast," Mrs. Stork reiterated for my benefit.

She ordered champagne. Then she set the full stop of her eye upon me with an eloquence denied to speech. "If this don't mean business, my lord," said that eye of hers, "I'll just thank you to tell me what it does mean."

At the moment I should have been thankful if I could. The conviction that I could not spoil the flavour of my lobster. My appetite was gone. I thought I would try a stroll across the golf-links.

"Heaven! sir, where are you going in such a hurry?" a rasping voice demanded. I had run full tilt into somebody entering as I left.

I did not waste breath in answering. I picked up the two heaviest looking

sticks the hat-stand held. One I kept for myself, the other I put into the hands of the hall-porter.

"You are to come with me," I said.

"Your lordship," he protested, "it's as much as my place is worth."

"Leave that to me. I have something for you."

Perhaps my manner impressed him, for without further ado he grasped the stick and strode after me. He was a powerful fellow. I was pleased to note.

"Is it Mr. Carble, your lordship?" he puffed. He was scarcely in condition for the pace we were making.

"I am anxious about a lady who went out with him this morning."

"Not been back since?"

"No."

The man whistled apprehensively.

"Looks back," he said. "His man was saying only last night he didn't like the looks of him. He's got a brother in an asylum. Can't really get on any faster, my lord."

The links were a desert of sand, with here and there bunkers and furze clumps, and artificial water-courses, which did duty for "burns." The ground was of the roughest, up hills and down dales of miniature size, with here and there smooth stretches of grass for "putting greens." There was not a soul in sight. But with that irregular formation we might at any moment come upon them in some dip of ground, or behind some sand-hill. We kept our eyes about us, and our weapons in the background. Our sudden appearance might by some

horrible mischance precipitate matters. If indeed— We hurried on.

If luck had not been on our side that mischance would have happened.

We were striding up a furze bank when I heard him laugh. There was no restraint or repression in it now. It rasped out terrible and long. It gashed the silent air. He had flung off the mask. God grant we were not too late!

I turned and caught the man behind me by the shoulder. I forced him to his knees. We crept up silently amid the furze. Arrived at the top we came in sight of them. They were some distance below us on a ledge in the sandy side of the slope. It would be impossible for us to approach without being seen. It would be impossible to reach them without giving him some minutes' start, for the ground was rugged and soft, and there was a hollow we must dip into and scale again before we could get to them.

Poor little Bunny sat huddled together, facing the point where we crouched, and the situation with distended eyes. Carvill stood over her, his profile to us, but keeping a furtive and continuous watch about him. One end of a razor strap was between his teeth, the other was in his left hand.

Along its stretched surface he slipped the sharp blade of a murderous-looking knife. I cursed the fate of circumstance. We could not advance a foot without discovering ourselves. And the slightest thing might set his knife at her throat.

"You'll never have a chance now of telling about my laugh," he said.

His speech was hindered by the ring of the strap between his teeth, but the words came clearly up the bank.

"No," she assented helplessly, her eyes fixed fascinated on him.

"It's you women who do all the mischief in the world," he went on, argumentatively. "You've got to be got rid of."

She made no answer other than an inarticulate moan.

He turned on her savagely, brandishing his knife.

"What did you say?" he demanded.

"I said yes," she cried meekly.

"So, as I said, I'm going to cut your throat the moment I get this damned knife sharp enough." Then, "What did you say?" he demanded again, brandishing the blade.

I measured the distance between us. I rose on my knees; but I feared. The slightest thing might set him on her.

"I said yes," she said meekly again.

Then, whether from sheer silliness or instinctive design, the poor little creature added feebly, "It will spoil my new frock, you know, Mr. Carvill."

I heard the big man beside me draw breath into his chest with a sob like a child's. I put my hand in warning on his shoulder. Carvill stopped sharpening his knife.

"Confound it! I never thought of that," he said.

Little Bunny had some sense after all. She saw her advantage, and made capital.

"It's so very light," she continued, looking guilelessly into his face, "it will show every stain."

"Confound it," he broke out violently. "I never thought of that. Why didn't you put on a darker one?"

"I will to-morrow," she assented, eagerly. "We can come again to-morrow. I will wear my old blue serge. That will not matter a bit."

Her voice broke. I could see by her terrible pallor the horror she was striving with.

"No," he objected. "It's going to be done now. You're not to be trusted. And by to-morrow there have got to be a thousand women less in the world. It's they do all the mischief."

But there was an air of discomfiture about him. In the ill-balance of his unhinged mind the thought of the spoiled frock affected him unpleasantly.

He sharpened his knife with an air which, though dogged, had an element of irresolution about it. He muttered to himself. Once he clenched his fist and shook it toward high heaven, the while the pupils of her eyes distended on him till their china blueness was a blackened horror.

Then he proceeded to strengthen his position by argument.

"You tell lies—all you women do," he blustered. "You deserve anything. You do nothing but deceive and cheat a man."

"But I don't," she pleaded. "I never tell big lies, Mr. Carvill, only little fibs sometimes that don't hurt anybody. Really I never do, Mr. Carvill."

Her voice half broke, again.

"It's a lie, it's a lie, it's a lie," he shouted frenziedly. "I'm not going to be talked out of it. If you don't, other

women do, and you've got to die with the rest. You take a chap's money and you want diamonds and anything you can get. You're so confounded greedy. She stretched two trembling palms to him, palms as pink and impotent as flower-petals.

"I am not really greedy," she pro-

going to be talked out of it. I only wish there was edge enough on this confounded blade, and you'd see how little effect your talking has."

"Eve was the first of you," he began again. "She was a woman, and brought all the trouble into the world. You can't deny that."



"A MINUTE LATER HE CRIED OUT AND FELL."

tested. "Really, Mr. Carvill, I am not. I only thought you might not mind me having that golf ball. You have so many. And I didn't really expect you to give me the gloves—not if you don't want to. You're wrong if you think I am greedy."

He stuffed his fingers into his ears.

"I'm not listening. I can't hear a word you say," he said. He shuffled with his feet and hummed. "I'm not

"No," she said hopelessly. "I can't deny that, because it's in the Bible."

"Well, then," he shouted, "that clinches it, and you've got to be killed for it."

She took refuge in her former plea.

"It will spoil my new frock," she cried out, piteously.

"Well, hang it, why didn't you put on so he other," he vociferated.

Suddenly he broke out laughing.

"Why," he cried, "you can take it off. What a little fool you are. Of course you can take it off."

Her face fell dismally. The loose lips twitched with a grievous helplessness. And all the while we lay there afraid almost of breathing, lest we should set him on her.

"Yes, I could take it off," she faltered. He passed his nail across the knife-edge. He flung the strop away.

"Then hang it, why don't you?" he shouted. "I'm ready now, and a precious lot I've got to do before morning."

The poor little thing made one heroic effort. She cast her eyes down shyly. I believe she actually blushed, though how her bloodless cheeks accomplished it Heaven only knows.

"O, Mr. Carvill, I should be ashamed to take my frock off with you here," she stammered modestly.

Again he was taken aback.

"I never thought of that," he said, nonplussed. "Curse it, why do you make such a fuss. I shall never have done to-night."

Her hand, resting on the sand beside her, flung up a feathery spray to the tremble of her fingers.

"If you were to go up the bank—" she faltered, with a pretty timidity, pointing directly where we lay.

"I thought, from the first, she'd caught sight of us," the porter gulped in my ear. "bless her plucky little heart and spare her."

"If you were to go up the bank," she repeated, tremulously, "I could—I

could"—"She could say no more. Now Heaven grant she do not break down. It must have been fear rather than courage that sustained her, for breath and strength were spent."

I gathered myself for a rush. In any case there could be but one ending. He strode in front of her and stood there, glaring. If she had cried out or shown the slightest fear he would have killed her then. But she showed no fear. Her large eyes rested on him vacantly.

"Swear you won't run away?" "Poor little creature. She had not breath enough to swear. But she nodded."

"And you won't call anyone?" Her lips motioned "No."

He turned with an impatient oath and came clambering up the bank.

"A chap can't be a beastly cad," he muttered.

A minute later he cried out and fell. The porter's stick and muscles had effected that. We took his knife from him and secured him as well as we were able.

Then I leapt down the slope. Poor little girl! She was sitting wan and pallid, her trembling fingers fumbling at the buttons of her half-unfastened bodice.

"I saw you all the time," she whispered, "but I didn't think it would be any use."

She caught my hand clingingly. "Lord Syfret," she entreated with a little sob, "don't ever tell mother I hadn't time to fasten up my frock."

Then she slipped down from her sitting posture, and lay in a faint amid the sand.

